

# The Journal of Liberal Religion

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## Salvation Through Worship

ROGER HAZELTON

Worship and salvation are seldom mentioned in the same breath. Protestants have an understandable suspicion of the magical notion of worship which treats the sacraments as means of salvation operating automatically and almost mechanically. But, being characteristically extremist in these matters, Protestants frequently build upon this reluctance the inadmissible conclusion that salvation and worship are altogether different and separate functions in the Christian life.

One may sympathize with this position without concurring in it. It is easy to see why Protestants would rather expect too little from worship than too much. Our whole heritage roots, of course, in a well-founded misgiving of the *ex opere operato* way of thinking in religion, and particularly about worship. Yet it is also true that we as Protestants do not ordinarily expect enough from worship. The reason why nothing deeply and permanently happens to men and women in worship is that we who lead them in worship do not expect it to happen. Our lack of a sense of expectancy, of urgency, in worship cheapens, numbs and even deadens the experience itself. One sure cause for this lack is a further lack of conviction regarding the genuine relevance of the act of worship to the saving of life.

We fear the idea that we are saved through worship as possibly more Catholic than Protestant, more sacramentarian than prophetic. Therefore let us clear up some possible misunderstandings at the outset. We are not holding that a man is saved by the instruments of worship,—the physical or verbal symbols, the beliefs assumed or stated in it, the gestures and postures appropriate to it, or its social and psychological environment. Nor do we mean that worship works automatically as a means of salvation, so that going through its



motions somehow insures contact with God to our certain benefit. Nor need we suppose that the meaning of salvation is exhausted in the meaning of worship.

At the same time we must avoid denying a partial truth to each of these statements. A chief peril of Protestant thought is the habit of exclusive interpretation, which singles out one principle or experience, and rules out all others, as regulative for the comprehension of the whole depth and reach of Christian living.

The point of this paper has been wisely and pertinently stated by Archbishop Temple in his book, *Nature, Man and God*:

The true aim of the soul is not its own salvation; to make that the chief aim is to ensure its perdition; for it is to fix the soul on itself as its centre. The true aim of the soul is to glorify God; in pursuing that aim it will attain salvation unawares. No one who is convinced of his own salvation is even safe, let alone saved. Salvation is the state of him who has ceased to be interested in whether he is saved or not, provided that what takes the place of that supreme self-interest is not a lower form of self-interest but the glory of God.

There are two propositions implied in this statement (both of which we shall wish to defend). The first is that worship, "glorifying God," and not salvation is the true aim of Christian living. The second is that salvation is attained, if at all, through worship as a by-product of its essential activity and purpose.

## II.

When we speak of salvation we may have in mind either a state or a process. We may be thinking of the end of salvation or its means, of its causes or its results. We may interpret it as God's gift or as man's achievement. Worse still, we may mean all these at once and more besides.

What concerns us here is not the state but the process of being saved. We so restrict our interest in an effort to be empirical. There may be, somewhere on the other side of life and time, a state of perfect blessedness which is salvation in the only full and final sense. But men caught in the web of here-and-now can only experience a process, a going-on or mode of life recognized as utterly and overwhelmingly good, embodying fugitive visions of a still more distant and wonderful good. We can only speak meaningfully about the

kind of salvation that is resident in human experience. For that experience, as Hocking has expressed it, "Salvation is, to seek salvation." It has "the anticipation of attainment."

The keynote of such experiences of salvation as we attain in this life is a felt, dynamic quality of ultimate goodness, attached not to one's self but to the Object of his experience, yet in the light of which one's self is strangely whole and his direction established. Salvation for us is a direction, not a point; a seeking, and not an arrival at static bliss.

This interpretation is thoroughly Protestant. It is true to the thought of the Reformation theologians, who insisted that man could not find his true blessedness in and through the actual world or by his own efforts alone. Moreover, it is thoroughly Christian. It is confirmed by Jesus' teaching that the condition of the saving of self is the losing of self. Waiving the question, perhaps important but certainly unanswerable, as to what salvation in the hereafter may be like, we know that such discernment of salvation as is vouchsafed to us here and now is of something, as it were, in the making. It is a perfection imperfectly grasped, a passing glimpse of ultimacy and worth.

The opposite of salvation in this sense is perdition, or lostness. Damnation or perdition has a this-worldly dimension as well as an other-worldly reference, as every reader of Dante or Milton knows. In this world, to be lost does not mean merely that one has not arrived at a specified point. It means that one's soul is without recognizably worthwhile direction, that its way is tangled and obscure. Paul described the difference between salvation and lostness in peculiarly vivid terms as the contrast between life and death. Being lost has about it the atrophy, the lethargy, the disintegration, akin to death; while salvation is vital, meaningful and energizing.

And what, then, is worship? We must characterize it also in empirical terms. It is, is it not, an experience of dynamic contrast, in which the self comes voluntarily into the awful presence of the Most High, coming strangely to himself and as strangely out of himself under the impact of God's will upon his own? It is a contrast of relevance, of living interplay, though not of hearty equalitarian co-operation between God and man, as some superficial liberal preaching and worship have assumed. Worship is rather to be conceived in terms of tension, creative and productive, between God the Object



and man the subject of the one experience. Friedrich von Hügel, who was wise in these matters, put it in another way:

The first or central act of religion is adoration, sense of God, His otherness though nearness, His distinctness from all finite beings, though not separation—aloofness—from them.

Worship is not simply a passive experience, in which the subject receives an impression as paper receives the pen. It is both impressive and expressive, subjective and objective. Worship is marked by effortful adjustment; as Hocking writes, it is the sphere of the will in religion.

Pietists have liked to think of worship in terms of emotional attachment to God through Christ. Rationalists, on the other hand, have thought of it as a mode of contemplative insight into truths and values of an ideal sort, taking their cue most commonly from the esthetic or moral experience. The sound instinct of the Christian community, however, has kept before its members the truth that worship is primarily an act, a willing commitment of one's self to God.

Though feeling and belief are inextricably involved in worship, they are shaped and patterned by that voluntary set of the soul toward God which is distinctive of the act. Let us be clear that worship is neither a mode of contemplative insight that sets a lovely distance between the worshiper and his world nor a glowing warmth of feeling, but an act into which idea and feeling are incorporated. We might in fact define worship as the sense and service of the living God.

### III.

We come now to defend our main thesis. The first proposition has two parts. Salvation is not the end of Christian living: that is the negative half of the statement. There are several reasons why it cannot be so. There is the moral consideration that to make one's own salvation the end of life is ego-centric, if not egoistic. Christian living thus becomes a disguised selfishness, originating in love for self and loving God because of the dividends such love pays in personal satisfaction, present or posthumous. How can we escape the conviction that to set up one's own salvation as his chief end involves a self-centeredness which cannot possibly be the aim of life on Christian terms?

One may grant this as regards personal salvation, but how about the salvation of others? May I not assume that their salvation is the proper aim of my living? To "win souls for Christ" has surely been the dominant purpose of many missionaries and evangelistic workers. The answer is that the dynamic for such evangelistic effort comes not from a general altruistic sentiment which wants to save others, but rather from loyalty to the God who wills that others shall be saved.

There is a further reason why salvation cannot be the aim of Christian living. When salvation is made the aim, Christian living becomes ultimately hedonistic in character. Happiness or blessedness becomes its dominant, controlling purpose. Psychologically it makes no difference whether this be conceived personally or socially. The pursuit of happiness, even of an exalted kind, for its own sake, is in the end self-defeating. As Harry Emerson Fosdick puts it, in typically pungent vein, "to get happiness is to forget it"; the surest way to miss it is to seek it.

No, Christian living is not a search after salvation, but a search after God. The hedonistic paradox, repeatedly noted by students of ethics, is that to seek happiness, even spiritual happiness, is necessarily to lose it. The Christian paradox is the other side of the same shield. To find one's life is to lose it, and lose it not alone in the service of other men, but in the service of God through serving them.

Worship, we have said, is the sense and service of the living God. Temple, following Calvinistic usage, calls it (in the passage quoted) "glorifying God." Even this conception does not confine worship to stated and formal occasions, or separate it from the other business of life. One may worship in his work, his play, his love and friendship, in so far as through these activities he serves and glorifies God.

So conceived, worship is the goal of Christian living. It has about it that distinterestedness celebrated by Spinoza and Walter Lippmann. It possesses that more distinctly Christian, unmercenary, uncalculating love praised by Augustine and Aquinas, Dante and Calvin, Edwards and Emerson. Edwards, for example, claimed that the man "whose affection for God is founded first on his profitableness to him begins at the wrong end."

True worship is neither calculating nor sentimental, but the adoration of what is supremely worthy of adoration, the love of what is intrinsically lovable. This disinterestedness marks Christian



worship at its highest and best. Salvation is conditional upon the giving up of self to God. Worship is precisely this voluntary, God-directed self-commitment. Therefore worship is essential to salvation. That is the gist of the present argument.

In worship we are brought face to face with that which is intrinsically good. That which has no other reason for being than that it is, is God. Worship, as its very name implies, is worth-ship, an experience of worth. But the worth to which the experience leads, and by which it is invested, is worth of a consummatory sort, not explained in terms of consequences but itself explaining the consequences. God is not "good for" anything. He is simply good; that is what it means to be God. And worship, as the sense and service of God, is man's feeble hold upon ultimate Good.

When a lesser good is taken for the greatest, worship becomes idolatry. There is much food for thought in the "jealousy of God" as portrayed in the Old Testament. The field of good is an arena of rivalry and conflict, heightened by the farce of mistaken identity and deepened by the tragedy of tardy recognition and persistent error. The greatest good is the harmony of all good, specified by the Christian as God. God's power and sway are challenged by the rival demi-gods of nationhood, race, and ecclesiastical group-egoism, which introduce bitter strife into His intended harmony. Truly, the Lord our God must be a jealous God!

But if lesser goods, like family care or sexual love, are seen as vehicles and intimations of the greatest good, idolatry is overcome. We say "Father," and catch up into the word all the tenderness, care and disciplinary direction of parenthood. We say "love"; and into the word flow all the intimacy of affection, all the poignant endearment, of romantic cherishing. Thus we ascend rightly to God by lesser and nearer stages. This is not idolatry but the very condition of true worship.

#### IV.

Such an experience as this, though it comes to us but seldom—and note that we have described essential worship, not its counterfeits or approximations—is what Christians ought to seek above all other things. We ought to seek it because it is our true aim, the heart's surest intent. We are aware, when worship has had her way with us, of extraordinary clarity and integrity of will, heightened vigor, sharpened sensitivity. We find focused in that one moment



rays of inexhaustible resource bent upon present perplexity and need. Actually more alive then than at other times, still it is not we who live but God's life that beats through our own. The moment of worship is akin to that in which great music overwhelms us with its evoking of thoughts too deep for tears, too high for words. In time, it is a glimpse of timelessness; in space, it trembles through us with a boundless melody.

Perhaps no actual experience of worship has ever meant to worshippers all that these words so haltingly suggest. What then? If not, our worship has missed its mark; it has not been true to its source and goal; it has exchanged appearance for reality. It still remains true that something like this experience is the note of essential worship; and we rightly judge failure in worship to be failure because it does not attain this stature.

We seek this experience because it is expressive of what is supremely worthful, even God. We do not seek it because it will make us better men, or pay dividends in a dubious hereafter. If we sought it for any of these things, we should not find it. And even if some or all of these good things resulted from worship, we should still not seek it for their sakes but for its own.

It is easier to recognize the authentic note in worship than to talk about it. Augustine saying "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee"; Thomas á Kempis saying "Where shall he be found who is willing to serve God for nothing?"; Jesus saying "Why callest thou me good?": these have the sure note of reality in worship.

It is by and through this experience, rather than because of what fruits it yields in us, that we are saved. What shall a man do to be saved? Let him glorify God and enjoy Him forever. If his sense and service of God are real, he will do the works; he will keep the faith; he will love the brethren. These are the tests of worship. They are not its goals.

A man to whom this experience comes will be saved unawares, because in confronting the real God he has ceased to be interested in whether he is saved or not. Such a man may never know that he is saved. He will not care to know. The anxious soul is not the saved soul, but a soul in the first stages of mortal sin. The soul that thinks it has salvation is assuredly not saved; to be a frank and unashamed sinner is better. George Santayana has said

that it is easier to make a saint out of a libertine than out of a prig. Exactly; for a libertine is at least one who has given himself up to pleasure, but a prig is so encased in his assurance of goodness that he cannot surrender himself to anything. His improvement, his progress in the religious life, his self-contained goodness, are his only concern.

And worship may not save the soul who has entered it in all sincerity and truth. Such a one may forget the Presence in which he has stood, or the world may be too much with him, or the pressures of circumstance and duty may batter to bits his briefly-held purity and integrity. Yet worship, taken as man's end, is his surest means of salvation. The paradox is unavoidable, for the experience of men often outruns their language and logic. "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you." This is high moral wisdom; it is certain religious truth.

We are saved when self-interest is overborne by surrender of the self to the glory of God. The moment of worship justifies itself and all the other moments of life, though these other moments test the quality of our worship, whether it be of God. Salvation is the result of worship, when and if the worshiper forgets salvation. Worship is the means of salvation, when it becomes an end in itself for the human spirit.



# The New Orthodoxy and the New Liberalism

THADDEUS B. CLARK

The New Orthodoxy and religious liberalism have more in common than is ordinarily suspected.<sup>1</sup> Their main ground of sympathy is their common dissatisfaction with the present character of Christianity and the pervasive corruption in the world. These are the two major criticisms of modern life which have arisen within the religious realm. Our concern must be not, however, with their sympathies but with their divergent interpretations and their suggested modes of solution.

Religious liberals have believed that their greatest contribution to modern life has been in releasing man from a fettering conception of himself which they maintain was never true in the first place; religious liberals have begun their theologies not on the premise that man is sinful by nature, but that he is by nature good. The New Orthodoxy, on the other hand, begins its theology as well as its prophecy by crying, "Repent! Repent!" Nothing could be as different in mood and temper as a liberal minister calling upon his people to rouse themselves to greater heights of good, and the preacher of the New Orthodoxy crying that this world is beyond salvation except we first repent. Whatever agreements may lie at the source of these two divergent modes of thought, by the time the divergent views have reached the pulpit not even black and white is an adequate description of the contrast.

The word "liberal" has been applied carelessly, and its use must be totally discouraged in one particular application. A type of liberalism haunts the orthodox churches which is liberalism only in an early, moralistic meaning of that word as "looseness." This type of liberal-

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<sup>1</sup>New Orthodoxy will be used as a designation for that stream of thought which has been identified with Barth, Brunner, and those in America such as Tillich and Niebuhr who are supposed to share the common basic presuppositions. It is obvious that these men do not wholly agree with each other. To lump them together is certainly an error. Yet they represent a protest of a sort which can be abstracted to a single point of view. The phrase, New Orthodoxy, refers in this article, then, to the abstraction which this author takes to be the fundamental character of this theological protest.

Religious liberalism in the same way is a movement and yet the form it receives at the hand of any contemporary theologian will diverge from what the author abstracts as *the* religious liberalism.

ism is a gradual and often unwitting adaptation to the changes in the times without a conscious attempt to relate this change to the basic theology which that church continues to claim. This is the sort of change which ordinarily takes place within the religious institution, for a church prefers to insist upon the changelessness of its creed while it erratically alters the remainder of its life.

That religious liberalism which deserves the name and which can be identified as a complete mode of thought is very different from this "looseness"; it is the heir of modern philosophy and science. It can be seen most clearly in its gradual departure from the Christian doctrine of the sinful nature of man.

Intellectually the eighteenth century was a protest against the doctrine of original sin. The eighteenth century found good in man, and believed that the world was his for the asking. The previous Christian view had been that this world was hardly worth asking for, and that our efforts might be more properly directed toward the next world. The eighteenth century could write into the American Declaration of Independence such a phrase as "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"—a phrase which is obviously unthinkable to any person who sincerely believes in the sinfulness of man's nature.

Just as the eighteenth century was a protest against metaphysical sin, so the nineteenth century was a protest against psychological sin. The nineteenth century destroyed conscience as an infallible guide to action, ushered in an era of sweetness and light, and told each individual that the world was his for the asking and that the devil would take the hind-most (rather than those who failed to repent). The freeing of the human spirit from the storms and stresses of feelings of sin and guilt moved forward in the world, but curiously the evangelistic movement in Protestantism, which must seem an anachronism, was the great religious movement of the nineteenth century. This movement preserved for the mass of people the sense of guilt and the fear of the devil. When Starbuck made his psychological investigations of religious experience he discovered the sense of sin present in almost every case, until he was very nearly willing to identify Christianity and the conversion experience. William James found a similar situation, although he does record in the *Varieties* the account of the religion of "healthy-mindedness," which he attributes to liberal Christianity.

A sense of guilt and feelings of sinfulness have even been thought



to be innate in the human being. The modern world has certainly established that these feelings are not present in every human being and are certainly not uniform. Perhaps the theology must first create a sense of sin so that the theology may later take it away. The author in attempting to pursue this psychological investigation among young people in the Unitarian Church gave up in despair since he could find no way to put the questions on feelings of sin and guilt so that the modern youngsters understood what he was inquiring about.

Liberalism, in a sense, has attacked and conquered the older Christian conception of sin. It has built the modern state and the modern moral code on a doctrine of goodness rather than on a doctrine of sinfulness. It has demonstrated that the feeling of guilt and sin is not present in all human beings and has suggested that proper education would continue the eradication of such feelings. The major departure of religious liberalism is in discarding the ancient Christian psychology and demonstrating it could build a new psychology. The orthodox churches which retain the ancient teaching but are lax in its application are basically of a different religious character, and we may well ask if liberalism is not a wholly new type of religion.

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Into this bright new world of "healthy-mindedness" has been thrown a world-shattering and personality-destroying catastrophe. This catastrophe is not merely the war and its horrors; it goes much deeper and is more pervasive and touches everywhere in cruel ways. It began to take form during the first World War; then it arose in Germany and other countries of Europe during the twenties and circled the world during the thirties. It expressed itself in a common inability to solve the personal problems of living. The "healthy-minded" found that his bright, clean hopefulness was unequal to the consuming devastation which laid him low.

Then suddenly in our midst we heard again the cry of "Repent!" The New Orthodoxy was apparently calling us back to the old psychology and to the old solution of that psychology. We need hardly be surprised, for if orthodox Christianity is to offer any solution to our problem it must be a sort of resurgence of orthodoxy, and we have been dupes if we expected anything else. This resurgent orthodoxy at its most superficial will be a call to the past, but in the hands of the best it will be a call to the future. It is most important to under-

stand this "best" interpretation of our world predicament, and it should be listened to by religious liberals with considerable attention since as a formulated system of thought it has progressed further than has post-crisis liberalism. Liberalism has by no means adequately explained itself in terms of the present world catastrophe.

Liberalism is in the unhappy state of having emancipated man to find that man may be uncontrollable in his emancipation. The ancient psychology gained a deep hold on man by enforcing the belief in sin. It is true that Christianity proposed to save man from his supposed sin for the sake of an after-life, but Christianity did, at the same time, have a firm control of man during this life. The importance Christianity attached to this life varied with the age and the variety of Christianity. The New Orthodoxy combines the approach of the old psychology with a deep concern for the affairs of this life, and it would frankly employ the well-proven Christian methods in the interests of the immediate world (though it may, as well, have its eye on another world).

The weakness of the New Orthodoxy is that it is no longer persuasive to large sections of the educated and liberalized public since they have no belief in inherited sin. In fact, this is the weakness of all orthodoxy, which day by day moves further toward taking on the garb of modern liberalism. Orthodoxy will have to find some way of re-establishing the sense of sin, before its approach can be completely effective, and in the meantime its acceptance will be partial. Orthodoxy may be expected to be successful in its appeal in situations where the world-catastrophe has produced a thorough conviction of inadequacy.

The weakness of religious liberalism lies in its inability to find a method by which to force men to accept a responsibility for this world's affairs. Democracy, the major breeding ground of the emancipated man, is notorious for the wide-spread failure of its citizens to participate responsibly in the solution of the problems of our common life.

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Liberalism is, of course, also a going back, as is the New Orthodoxy, for liberalism has ancient roots. These roots are probably grounded mainly in Plato. Reinhold Niebuhr, in the summer of 1942 in a lecture at the Union Theological Seminary, made a contrast that emphasizes this unique ground. Niebuhr said that the



modern world is characterized by a belief that our inadequacies are shortcomings of knowledge, so that we expect, when we have learned enough, to be able to solve our problems. This he interprets as a "sweetness and light" point of view which holds that men are basically good although now and then misguided. Niebuhr, on the other hand, holds that there are evil men, and that only a change in heart can bring about a change for the better in the world situation. The wide-spread modern view that our failure is an inadequacy of knowledge, Niebuhr holds to be a Platonic conception. It is Platonic in the sense that Plato held that the ideas are perfect and that our world is always an imperfect mirroring of the ideas; hence our inadequacy is the inability to realize perfectly the ideas in this imperfect world.<sup>2</sup> This view is not only good Plato, it is also good Whitehead; if we take Plato as the first liberal, we may take Whitehead as one of the last.

Alfred North Whitehead is, in a way, the first man to insist that Plato was not a good Christian. Niebuhr evidently believes this, too, and thinks that the mistake was Plato's. Whitehead said in class once that his metaphysic was a denial of the whole Christian tradition that God has something to do with history.<sup>3</sup> God, for Whitehead, is the ultimate perfection of all possibility, and this world is the ever incomplete actualization of those possibilities. This Niebuhr would certainly indicate as the heresy against which he declaims.

The New Orthodoxy finds God very much involved in history. In this respect it is practically pre-Christian and thoroughly Judaic, for the Old Testament is our best example of the God-in-history point of view. Christianity has been a sort of Judaic corruption of

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<sup>2</sup>The phraseology here is more Professor Whitehead's than Plato's, as it will be throughout. It is well known that Whitehead and Plato do not agree on the status of the ideas and their method of participating in actuality, as is indicated by such a statement of Whitehead's as "These factors are the famous 'Ideas,' which it is the glory of Greek thought to have explicitly discovered, and the tragedy of Greek thought to have misconceived in respect to their status in the Universe." *Harvard Divinity School Bulletin*, April 14, 1942, p. 10. Yet on the point where Niebuhr is making his attack, Plato and Whitehead are in substantial agreement and stand side by side.

<sup>3</sup>This quotation from a lecture statement must necessarily be inexact and needs further clarification. Professor Whitehead objects clearly to the constant attempt within Christianity to find God acting as an "agent" in history. God, for Whitehead, has a relevance to history, as everything has a relevance to history, in the sense that history is the succession of events, for everything ultimately has no existence except as a part of actual events. God relates to history not as a "force," but merely as "persuasion."

Plato up to the time of Whitehead who would purge us of the corruption by going directly to Plato.

Modern science is also Platonic (its superficial belief in mechanism and naturalism notwithstanding). Modern science is essentially the study of the forms which matter takes, or, if you prefer, of matter taking form. Modern science began to progress speedily when it gave up the idea that it could contemplate the forms directly and looked at matter to find the forms, although it made the very human mistake of going too far in deciding that matter was its special business and concluding therefore that the forms were either unimportant or unreal. Modern science is the attempt to see what idea or form matter exemplifies, such as, trying to discover the mathematical formula which will describe the movement of the stars. Modern science is definitely not Judaic nor can it subscribe to the New Orthodoxy for it finds no place for God in movement.<sup>4</sup> It is probable, however, that this general inability of science to find God as a force molding events is proof of nothing, for, since science started with Platonic presuppositions, it would be surprising if it ended with any conclusions which did not follow from those presuppositions.

What then is the criticism the New Orthodoxy would make of this stream of thought which has finally blossomed into fruition in contemporary liberalism and which believes man is essentially good and rightfully entitled to full happiness? The criticism is quite simple and thoroughly damning; it is that this stream of thought provides no ethic at all and will lead to utter despair. Repent! says the New Orthodox for man is evil and unless his evil is redeemed, hope of salvation is forever set aside. Then it adds that God alone can provide this redemption from evil—thus God enters history as an actual force in its construction. According to the liberal notion there is no meaning in calling upon God to save one in his repentance since God

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<sup>4</sup>Science has thought on several occasions, in the person of one or the other of its theologians, that it had discovered God; but seldom has this God been supposed to act as an agent in movement. Science's God is often the Creator and often the Guarantor of Law, but very seldom does any scientist claim that God is directly responsible for some form of activity. Although a few physicists have argued that God might be a necessary hypothesis employed to explain sub-atomic activity, God cannot be used by physics in such a meaning. Whenever science is at a loss for a statement of law which will cover some new evidence, God is for the moment invoked, but soon some approximation will destroy the need for the superfluous hypothesis—for Science would reduce even the acts of God to statements of law, which would then render the notion useless in explaining what was not reducible to law.



is the perfection of forms and He merely holds these ready for one to exemplify in his life—he cannot force one life or another on anyone for he is all life not yet become real in the life we are about to live.

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Any attempt to understand the liberal point of view must again begin with its doctrine of man. Liberalism in the nineteenth century extolled man as a worthy and good creature. In this century it is having misgivings. Yet it would be a great mistake to believe that any sensible thinker of the nineteenth century held that man was perfect, for certainly the nineteenth century could only hold that man was able to become perfect although hardly perfect in this world. Thus we must presume that the liberal point of view does not and never did hold that man was perfected and without limitation. If the New Orthodoxy claims or implies that liberalism holds that man is already totally good or even predisposed to good, it obviously has fallen into a very superficial error.

Liberalism must hold that man in any present state is imperfect. The liberal doctrine according to Plato or Whitehead, for example, is clear in its insistence that at any given moment man is a partial and imperfect exemplification of God.

In the present place it is unnecessary to examine in detail the nature of the limitation which liberalism ascribes to man. The difference between liberalism and the New Orthodoxy lies in what each claims man's limitation implies. The New Orthodoxy calls man's limitation evil and sin. Liberalism calls it shortcoming and failure. The New Orthodoxy dwells upon it; liberalism puts it aside as sadly inevitable.

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The great psychological weakness of liberalism is that it is a better fair-weather ethic; in times of crisis it discovers its inadequacies. It is inclined to unjustified optimism, which disintegrates to despair. It is inclined to self-satisfaction, which shatters into hopelessness. It is inclined to a confidence in human ability, which when destroyed ends in a paralysis of will. These are all the inevitable failings of emphasizing the potentialities rather than the limitations of man. Liberalism is a great ethic for good times, for it leads to effort piled on effort in an abundance of the accumulation of good. Liberalism

provides no check for its free spirit, and it soars aloft until it is rudely dashed back to earth.

Liberalism is obviously no religion for those persons who are caught in a situation in which they find themselves helpless, at least, not the present liberalism inherited in America from the nineteenth century. The cry of "Repent!" and the claim that there is a God outside the world who will come in to redeem one is the only appeal to a man hopelessly trapped.

We may ask on the other hand what sort of ethic the New Orthodoxy offers for good times and for those in situations full of hope. The answer is quite obvious: the New Orthodoxy offers nothing appetizing and people are not at all interested. Not even yet is the cry of "repent!" heard enthusiastically in this land. Hopelessness has not overcome the spirit of America. There is probably more hopefulness in America today than five years ago. More people probably see a solution to their private human problems than in 1937. The hour is not yet ripe for the New Orthodoxy here, and it must bide its time.

The present moral perplexities are but transient human sorrows, however, unless they indicate a basic weakness in either orthodoxy or liberalism. Liberalism is likely to be inadequate as a moral code for it too easily breeds an unjustified optimism, but is this inadequacy an indication that liberalism holds to a basically incorrect picture of the universe or of God? Liberalism holds that God is not a force in history, but rather the perfection of all forms imperfectly realized in history. Is this an incorrect interpretation of God? This author holds, of course, that it is not, and it is probably useless to try to argue the point in this limited space. On the other hand, to maintain as the New Orthodoxy must that God enters history as a force molding events, the author would maintain, is an hypothesis unsupported by any evidence. Or, stated more accurately, he would hold that the evidence requires no such hypothesis. The contemporaneous failure of either or both of these views before the practical problems of world life is no disproof of ultimate validity. People too quickly conclude that this or that has been a total failure and that its doom has been sealed.

Let us be the first to admit, however, that both democracy and liberalism have been inadequate in the forms in which they have

existed, while we are firm in our faith that the two are full of promise.

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Thus far it has been admitted only that liberalism, as it has been known, may fail in a human crisis where hope seems lost. A point of view such as that held by the New Orthodoxy, however, is likely to provide some satisfaction in this situation, for it says that hope can come from the outside. Yet this is no dis-proof of liberalism or proof of orthodoxy. If a man despairs, any source outside himself may be grasped and found to provide reason for further existence. Not only may the Christian God suddenly enter to provide new hope, but also the Devil, or for that matter spiritualism or Hitler. Yet the proof or disproof of a theology does not lie in whether it can provide hope in the midst of despair—almost anything can, even liberalism at times! The manner in which hope is provided follows a customary pattern. If a man hopes for a beautiful home and economic security and then suddenly the politico-economic world around him robs him of all likelihood of gaining this end, he is for the moment lost and may even contemplate suicide. New hope is provided by a sort of conversion—the bearer of hope says, "But that isn't what you really wanted! You wanted this instead!" The emissary then proceeds to explain the advantages of the new hope and its attainability. This is all Hitler did; he said to the weary and despairing: "You don't want to live! You want to die! Come with me and we'll fight to a glorious death!"

Why is liberalism so inadequate before a man who is lost in despair? For several reasons: It offers no simple and ready course of action. It provides no single clear-cut new goal to strive for, but offers many goals. It promises no power from the outside to provide a miracle, for it finds no such power.

When all is said and done liberalism is the most unsatisfying of all religions and the hardest—it stands a man on his own two feet and can do little more than tell him then of all the forces in the universe which are trying to topple him over. Obviously the only course of action which is entirely consistent with liberalism's nature is for it to explain and indicate these perverse forces in order to prepare a man for the world's perils. No man wants to listen to the sad tale of his likely sorrows, however, and liberalism degenerates easily into feeble and blind optimism. This is the reason, at the same time, why liber-



alism is a religion and is not just an academic philosophy—for liberalism is a way of approaching life, and it requires a church in which to consolidate itself.

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Liberalism may expect at this moment in the world's history to be approaching a decline. This is not a moment when men will be turning to liberalism. Liberalism is a questing religion in search of new and higher goals. At the moment we are faced with the need for action; we will be forced to select from amongst the goals before us and set our course. Questing, for the moment, is out. The goals that we do select and set for ourselves will be, in a sense, demoniac; they will be partial, temporary, and misleading. Each one will be erected here and there as a high idol and some single-minded men will bow down to worship. Every goal that succeeds in gaining a large following will be pursued long after it has meaning or use, and the next great crisis in the world's history will be over the clash and disintegration of these out-lived goals. But that is the way of history, for men live with their limitation and their limitation is that they can be only a few of the many things they might be.

Liberalism chooses to emphasize possibility and the New Orthodoxy emphasizes limitation; on this point the disagreement is over emphasis, and the New Orthodoxy will gain an increasing number of adherents today since we need to understand our limitations. What liberals eventually have to say to the orthodox is this: We shall expect all our children back once the crisis is passed and the new lines of movement settled, for ours is the view which emphasizes hope and the infinite abundance of life, and that is what men want. Life must move forward, and we have the major explanation of the wide scope of possible human advance, for we do not prescribe limitation.<sup>5</sup>

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The intention of this investigation has been to discover whether the New Orthodoxy has a contribution to make to the basic concep-

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<sup>5</sup>This must not be taken to imply a doctrine of progress in any simple sense of that term. Liberalism accepts change as the constant quality of everyday life, and recognizes that to live is continually to make decisions and form the life that is coming into being at the moment. The path we take may not be better than the path we have trod. All we know is that we cannot tread the old path, and that our simple and continuous problem is the route we must take in the future. We hope our advance will be a progress, but certainly we have come to realize that the universe does not guarantee that our advance will be a progress regardless of what we do.

tions of liberalism. The conclusion must be that in the realm of theology religious liberalism has nothing to learn from the New Orthodoxy. In the realm of actual life, at the same time, liberalism should be aware of the fact that in certain human situations orthodoxy, in one form or another, can be more appealing. The present interest in the idea of "sin" within liberalism is good evidence of an awareness of inadequacy. Yet the author holds that our fundamental philosophy is not wrong, but that we have drawn several wrong conclusions. The "rugged individualism," the automatic progress, and the "all's right with the world" attitude which have so often infested liberalism are not correct psychological conclusions from the fundamental philosophy. Several of our moral deductions must be considered.

The major inference for morals which liberals should draw from their emphasis upon possibility is that man should be up and doing, earnestly seeking the betterment of all under his control. So often our attitude has been the opposite. James Luther Adams has made an especial attempt to understand how liberalism may learn from orthodoxy in a re-appraisal of our psychology.<sup>6</sup> Unless contemporary liberalism can gain a new moral attitude it will not weather these days, and we may expect a new liberalism to take its place.

The second major failure of the morals of liberalism is its total in-

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<sup>6</sup>James L. Adams, in his recent article, "The Changing Reputation of Human Nature," *THE JOURNAL OF LIBERAL RELIGION*, IV (1942-3), elaborates a doctrine which might best be called Rational Voluntarism. Adams may be thought at first glance to have some affinity with New-Orthodoxy, but this is an illusion created by the frequent appearance in the article of the word "sin" as well as such phrases as, "... it is not our wills alone that have acted; ..." "... we ought to be willing to take the risk we would incur by giving more serious consideration ... to the sinful nature of man, ..." pps. 160, 151f. Professor Adams is an arch-liberal who is all too aware of a few of our damning shortcomings. The simple rationalism which characterized much of liberalism (and much of modern science) Adams finds inadequate, since this rationalism alone does not provide an adequate ethic for modern man. Adams agrees with the New Orthodoxy that a "change of heart" is necessary, for this "... has been neglected by religious liberalism, and that is the prime source of its enfeeblement." p. 160. He is arguing against the almost inevitable weakness of liberalism which results from its emphasis upon possibility. Professor Adams' position is that we can emphasize possibility and avoid the resulting dangers only if we understand that a "commitment" to liberal principles is necessary. This author agrees entirely that this is the only route by which religious liberalism can become worthy in this present world or any world. If Professor Adams intends to go the whole way and maintain that God is not an "agent" in history, the author could find no basic disagreement with him.

ability to understand the nature of human society as exemplified in the church. The liberal emphasis upon human possibilities, one might have supposed, would have led to the realization that a greater range of possibilities could be actualized in the community than in the single individual, yet liberals have treated their religion as if it were exemplified primarily in the individual. The reverse is true since the largest body of limitations restricting the individual are those of the community of which he is a part, and he can free himself only through greater realization by the community. The liberal church has so often, for example, been no more than a pulpit for protest which has made that church of very little value to the individual in providing him with a ground where he could expansively develop himself.

Religious liberalism can be confident of its basic assertions. It needs to be utterly humble before its failings in the torn and battered world.



# How Are Theological Conclusions Demonstrable?\*

E. A. BURTT

To demonstrate any proposition is to cause it to appear true to another. One never needs to demonstrate to oneself, for as soon as he is in a position to make the demonstration it becomes superfluous. One can, for himself, free an idea from confusion; he can realize its truth more vividly than before; he can supplement it by new discovery. But he can demonstrate it, if at all, only to others.

Can theological conclusions be demonstrated, and if so, how?

Theologians and religious philosophers have usually been confident that demonstration is possible in this field, and that it is to be accomplished in the fashion set by the methodology of science prevailing in their day. Prior to the critical challenge of Hume and Kant it was generally assumed that the rationalistic method of demonstration was applicable to theology as a matter of course. This method consists in the intuitive seizure of certain first principles which, it was taken for granted, will be accepted by those toward whom the demonstration is directed, followed by the logical deduction from those principles of the conclusions to be proved. If the first principles indispensable in this procedure are asserted with no attempt to justify them systematically by appeal to relevant facts, the method is *a priori*. If they are abstracted from given facts by some preliminary analysis, it is the method of so called Aristotelian empiricism. But even in the latter case it is rationalistic as judged by modern standards, since the facts employed furnish merely the starting-point for the erection of a rational structure; once the fundamental concepts are distilled they take no worrisome responsibility for continuous and detailed verification in the presence of new facts and new ways of describing and explaining them. In either case, the method is modelled after the procedures of mathematical science, as the latter was conceived before the days when a radical distinction between mathematical and physical truth came to be recognized.

After Hume and Kant this method was no longer as plausible as it had appeared to be. The traditional first principles could not be

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\*The substance of one of a series of three lectures given at The Meadville Theological School during the spring quarter of 1943.

taken for granted any more. Modern empirical inquiry implied a radically different metascience, demanding that all explanatory concepts be so defined that their relevance to experienced facts is rendered obvious and that hypotheses stated in their terms be capable of detailed verification. In an intellectual climate determined by this demand, demonstration of any conclusions which refer to matters of fact must consist in finding some way to point out verifying facts to persons not yet convinced, so that they can see that the asserted truths are adequately supported. The entire methodology of the factual sciences in our time is affected by the quest for conditions of perceptual verification which can be counted on to remain constant for any normal observer. Dangers to the objectivity of science due to the variable personal equation are thus reduced to a minimum, and demonstration is possible to any one who understands what sort of evidence is necessary and sufficient. Liberal theology, for a century and a half, has been struggling to find an adequate way of applying this methodology to religion. It has sought a procedure for unambiguously identifying facts of experience which are distinctively religious, for redefining theological categories so that they will clearly be relevant to these facts, and for restating Christian doctrines in such a manner that they can be confirmed or rejected by appeal to appropriate facts.

This struggle is far less hopeful today than it was a generation ago. And the main reason for the discouragement is that even after a long continued and scrupulous pursuit of this route theology remains a competitor with science instead of finding, as had been hoped, an assured place as one branch of empirical science among the others. For none of the facts which it claims as distinctively its own is surrendered to it by other branches of science; moreover, these alternative claimants are confident that their way of categorizing and explaining any supposedly religious fact is more objective and impartial—more harmonious, that is, with the essential character of science—than the theological way. What the theologian calls the experience of dependence on God is for the psychologist the satisfaction of a search for a more stable security than can be found in one's human relations; no "God" concept is for him necessary in its interpretation. What the theologian calls the experience of sin and its forgiveness is for the psychoanalyst a persistent guilt-feeling dissipated when its subconscious cause is brought to light; the hidden role is played by

the father of one's childhood rather than by any dubious divinity. Thus theology as an empirical science seems condemned to the position of pretender and interloper. Any person to whom you attempt to demonstrate a theological conclusion can always say—and more and more frequently does say—"But the facts to which you appeal can be explained more objectively in other terms." There thus appear to be no distinctively religious facts after all, in the sense of facts which can be proved to require theological concepts for their adequate interpretation. Religious empiricism has become as bankrupt as religious rationalism for several centuries has been.

Is theology then intrinsically incapable of demonstration? And if not, what sort of demonstration is possible?

The answer to these questions is to be sought, I believe, by taking seriously the thought which is almost irresistibly suggested by the outcome of this historical effort to make theology an empirical science. Theological terms are *value-concepts* as well as fact-concepts; they not only introduce order into a certain range of fact, but they also evaluate those facts in a distinctive way. God is not merely a metaphysical ultimate, but an ultimate satisfying man's moral and emotional needs. This is why the theological explanation of any fact can always be challenged by a non-theological explanation; each interpretation expresses a different evaluation. The non-theological account expresses a decision to prize above other values scientific objectivity and the employment of a single set of impartial categories throughout all man's explanatory activities. The theological account expresses a decision to prize above everything else such a mode of interpretation as will facilitate full personal adjustment, emotional as well as intellectual, to the complex of facts involved. It insists on allowing for a factor which from the scientific standpoint is irrelevant, while the scientist is determined to content himself with a controlling value which from the theological standpoint is radically insufficient.

If this analysis is correct, the question whether and how theological conclusions are demonstrable can only be answered by sinking it in the following inquiry: In what way are values capable of demonstration, both in general and with special reference to the particular kind of values which theological assertions involve? A large subject, which can barely be introduced in an essay of the present scope!

The general answer will need to discriminate basically between instrumental and final values, and in essence it will be as follows:



When the value is instrumental—that is, derives its value from its status as necessary means to the realization of something other than itself—demonstration consists in finding some end already desired by the person to whom the demonstration is directed, such that he can see the value as standing in instrumental relation to it. The only way to demonstrate the value of a surgical operation is to show the individual who must undergo it that it is needed if health is to be enjoyed, and if for any reason the end does not seem worth the cost no demonstration is possible.

In the case of a final value the demonstration must consist in finding some way to exhibit it, in the presence of those to whom the demonstration is directed, as superior to any alternative. How this is to be done depends upon the sort of final value that is in question and the present state of mind, in its regard, of the recipients of the proposed demonstration; of course there is never any guarantee of success in the enterprise. One technique which is usually if not always serviceable is to clothe the value to be demonstrated in an artistic dress which already possesses value on its own account for those to whom it is hoped that the proof will appeal. Thus the support of vivid associations can be secured in the initial task of winning favorable attention to the value to be proved. Here is one of the main roles of esthetic symbolism, to which churches, as well as other social institutions, have never been blind in their endeavor to make the values in which their leaders deeply believe effectively persuasive to others. A good which does not now appeal will begin to appeal as soon as it is clothed in imagery already potent to move men's hearts. To be sure, this appeal is transitory unless those who are reached by it find the satisfying emotions that are awakened supported by other factors; this is why Billy Sunday revivals and spell-binding oratory in general are in the long run such unsatisfactory techniques for bringing about stable and permanent transformations in what people value. The pressure of reality must be found to harmonize with the suggestions of the artistic symbol.

Now let us center attention on the specific values with which religion is primarily concerned. When the value involved is the value of a rich and full character, is in short an ideal of personality in its wholeness, there is a special reason why dramatic symbolism can play at best but a partial and temporary role in demonstrating it to one who does not already find it persuasive. No matter how skill-

fully the literary genius gives richness of appeal to his hero he can never allow himself to forget that his power collapses the moment his character appears *unreal*. For the value of a personality is a value at all (from a moral or religious viewpoint) only if it is seen as capable of exemplification; it must appear more than merely fictitious. We find here the vital reason why Christian theology finds it necessary to attribute its ideal of a perfect character, whatever form that may take in any generation, to the historic Jesus of Nazareth, and why Buddhism has done the same with its founder. It is hoped that such an identification will give a sense of historic reality to a portrayal otherwise in danger of appearing unreal and thus unpersuasive in its quality of value. And by calling these great figures divine as well as human, theology has not taken back with one hand what it gave in the other, for it has known that to the mass of men divinity does not mean being a metaphysical (and thus non-human) source of reality, but being an effective support in the quest for total adjustment to the practical conditions of human living.

But when it concentrates on such doctrines theology does forget that historic exemplification is not enough to give validity to such a value. For by this route no answer can be given to the question: Can the personality thus conceived be real *today*? And to avoid the suspicion of being fictitious rather than genuine, in its relevance to contemporary human need, a character must not only be conceived as real somewhere and somehow; it must have the ring of reality here and now. In the last analysis this can only be accomplished by its exemplification here and now.

The sobering challenge to the leaders of religion embodied in this thought has usually been accepted in its moral implications; to become as Christlike as one may, in character and in conduct, has been recognized as his responsibility by every earnest Christian. But its implication for the possibility of demonstrating theological propositions has ordinarily been realized only by scattered pious souls who have had no influence on the systematic development of theology. The theologian has been fully aware, when moving outside his study in friendly contact with his fellowmen, that it is impossible to demonstrate the reality of God to a man in need of a crust of bread in any other way than by sharing with him the bread, but he has failed to realize the radical character of this consideration in its bearing on his quest for a theology capable of demonstration. He has written

his system as though it could be made persuasive to any normal mind without any humane transformation of the world in which that mind lives, just as the conclusions of a science can be made persuasive by leaving the world of fact to which they apply just as it already is. This, however, is a desperately false assumption, and the above analysis indicates why.

Theological propositions are only demonstrable, in the fashion of scientific conclusions, to those whose experience of the world has already become such that they can interpret it in full harmony with the theological categories and the doctrines expressed in their terms. And to them the demonstration is superfluous; at most it is a periodically helpful reminder of how their world can be intellectually unified on a basis which allows a central place for the final values to which they are committed. To others, neither the reality of God nor any other theological doctrine can be demonstrated by argument, however skillfully it marshals coherent inference from masses of apparently relevant fact. If they evaluate those facts differently, the reasoning is impotent. And it may easily appear insulting as well as impotent; if I have not already found in my world a good sufficiently powerful to overcome evil, to tell me blithely in words that there is such a good is a cruel mockery of my despairing experience. The only pertinent argument here is action; here is an obvious field in which the truth reigns: Those who talk do not understand, and those who understand do not talk. So make my world, as far as in you lies, more like the kind of world I would expect it to be if God were real. Increase my evidence, by your conduct, that the word 'God' stands for something genuinely operative in my world; then, when it is no longer needed, your formal argument may be persuasive. And whatever you say to me, while performing this primary role, must be said in terms that already convey meaning to my mind—the terms not of theology but of homely common sense and humane feeling that all men everywhere understand.

The upshot is that friendly sharing of human tragedies and progressive purification of social institutions is much more than the expression of an awakened moral responsibility in religion. It is an essential condition of demonstration in theology. Theological systems will continue to appear unpersuasive to uneducated as well as to educated men—and most completely so in times of stress and agony—until they are radically rewritten in such a way as to harmonize with



the fundamental consideration that not only are theological concepts value-concepts but also that theological doctrines are demonstrable only in the way in which ultimate values are in the long run demonstrable. Proof in theology can never be an affair of verbal argument alone, nor even of such argument clothed in vividly appealing symbolism. It also requires exemplification in conduct, and such exemplification is foundational. For whenever the meaning of a category is hazy and its relevance to fact unobvious, the logical gap thus yawning can only be filled by appropriate action, giving it the clarity of life and the persuasiveness of undoubted present reality.

## “Will You Marry Us?”

JOHN HOWLAND LATHROP

The influence of the war upon marriage is reflected in parish registers throughout the country. The register of my church shows twice as many marriages during this last year as usually take place. The percentage is probably high because New York is a port of embarkation. The minister who takes his vocation seriously is concerned. The disruptions of today make him eager to have young people snatch what happiness they can even for brief moments. Yet consultation often reveals that knowledge of each other is too scant to assure a permanent, happy union between the two, should events return the soldier to his bride for the journey down the years. In a recent solicitation to perform the marriage ceremony, I became convinced that the risks were too great and that conflict and unhappiness would almost inevitably result and I took the responsibility of dissuading the two from carrying through their intention. They did not “go ’round the corner” to another clergyman but decided against their venture.

How does a minister dare interfere in the affairs-of-the-heart of young people? Concern for the values of the monogamy which society is attempting with only partial success, compels him to. The purpose of religion is the increase of human well-being and happiness. A minister of religion is more than an officer of the state in performing a marriage ceremony. He also gives the blessing of religion and he cannot conscientiously do so unless he believes that he is furthering human well-being and happiness. The flare of fascination that he sees before him may or may not prove the foundation of the structure of love which is the fruit of years of shared experience. He must concern himself with the probabilities. Monogamy enables two individuals to plumb the depths and scale the heights of personal relationships, which no butterfly relationship can do. Only when two enjoy together and suffer together can they penetrate to the recesses of each other’s natures and gain the respect (I had almost said “reverence”) which love, as religion means it, implies. For such spiritual achievement the minister of religion strives to prevent the increase of the tragedy of the breaking of the vow, “so long as we both shall live.” He is concerned for the couple themselves, for their children who will be the innocent victims and for the institution of the home upon which society rests. He

must throw the light of experience upon the proposition that is made to him by two young people who ask him to marry them. They will themselves as a result, discern the wisdom or the folly of proceeding with marriage.

The criteria he uses come to him from dealing with the long, sad procession of those who have revealed their marital unhappiness to him over the years and who seek his aid out of a lingering reluctance to sunder ties that were established upon sex intimacy. This, if he has been in the ministry some years! If he is a young man, he must depend upon funded experience in the pages of books. Happily good books are increasing in numbers. Some years back most treatises on marriage dealt almost wholly with the physical aspects of marriage on the general assumption that sex ignorance and maladjustment were the main causes of marital unhappiness. Today, there is full recognition of equally important social, psychological and economic causes for success or failure. The volume which came out of the State University of Iowa in 1940 as a result of a course offered there, *Modern Marriage*, is a model and might properly be the guide of any young minister desirous of fitting himself for counselling. The editor, Moses Jung, has assembled twenty chapters, each the work of a specialist in the field dealt with, and has not therefore, done as so many authors have, attempted to be biologist, psychologist, etc., all himself. This to my mind, gives the book peculiar virtue, in spite of the fact that one or two of the authors do not seem to know that in using English to express scientific conclusions, one might lend charm by paying heed to literary style. In a recent course on "Preparation for Marriage," I recommended *Modern Marriage* as supplementary reading. It was interesting to see to what an extent it provoked consideration of problems which had never occurred to this group of young people before and which they recognized as vital. Also, America had entered the war shortly after the book was published and my course was announced by the Y.M.C.A. Secretary as "Marriage in War Time," and it was interesting to me to note that nothing in the changed conditions had in any way affected the applicability of the contentions of the book.

In these days when the taboo is largely removed from sex and the body is coming into its own as the miracle that it is, I am convinced that young people need to be brought to see the importance



of other factors in successful marriage far more than the sexual. "How long have you known each other?" is my usual question for leading into a consideration of social backgrounds, economic standards, psychological influences and types. Very quickly the couple become so interested that what they had supposed was to be a brief consultation about ritual, lengthens out into a long evening. Since the shifting population of a great city affords little opportunity for training in advance of the selection of a life partner, the best one in my position can hope for is that he has quickened insight into the factors that may occasion conflict and given some hints as to how to handle conflicts when they arise.

Ideally one chooses a partner with whom there is likelihood of a minimum rather than a maximum of conflicts. This does not imply calculation that drives out romance, any more than the unreasoned limitations to the field of choice such as everyone draws, drives out romance. Because an English-American does not expect to find his partner in the feminine loveliness of Chinatown, he feels no restrictions upon "a young man's fancy." Similarity of social background with the conventions, standards and interests that belong to that background; similarity of psychological type, objective or subjective; comparable economic status; all tend to understanding and easy adjustment. Where there is radical difference in any of these only a deliberate effort at understanding and a cultivated delight in difference, with a "live and let live" determination, can make for success. Continually there come to my study, marriages that are about to break up, of partners who have never understood each other because: one had always worked hard for every penny and "knew the value of money" and the other had been accustomed to an ampler scale of living with all that implies in standards of expenditure and service; or one was of a nature that demanded the companionships of many and the other was reclusive; or, one was bred in small town standards of propriety (regarded as morality) and the other had only known the "do as you like" atmosphere of a metropolis.

Psychological conditioning is the primary factor in happiness or misery. Patterns of what a woman or a man ought to be are set early in the child's mind. A girl ought to know what the man's mother was like before she promises to marry him. Quite apart from the Oedipus complex of which all too many boys are victims,

a mother's way of doing things forms an image against which a wife is certain to suffer judgment. "There is one thing that you do at the altar which is of importance," I always say to a groom, "You take the woman who has always been first in your life and deliberately put her in second place. And you take the girl who stands beside you and put her in first place. If you can't do that, you had better remain a bachelor, for your wife will never have a fair chance."

The conditioning that results from religious training shows itself in surprising ways. To the question, should a Christian marry a Jew, should a Protestant marry a Catholic, there is only one answer, "Yes and no, according to your understanding." All three are great cultures but they are different. The problem is not solved by deciding that each partner shall go to his own church or to none. The conditioning may determine whether one will consent to his child's being trained in a progressive school, for example. It is hard for one nurtured on an authoritative system to give his consent to a system of free self-expression.

I have hinted at only two of the many mind sets that may become occasions of conflict. The counsellor has the privilege of exploring with the youth who come to him the complex realities which they themselves are and which they know and understand all too little. I have never known an instance in which there was not gratitude for the illumination that comes from free and searching conversation. And it has often happened that those who started their married life from such conversations have come back later on to talk of developments through experience or because some problem has arisen which needs a physician of the soul.

The obligations of new ways of living are slow in their recognition. For example, the modern world often compels both husband and wife to be bread-winners through the first years at least, of their married life. That this throws the obligation of being home-makers upon them both equally is not grasped. I have seen the tired young business man acting according to the older tradition, with the newspaper in the easy chair, and the tired young business woman over the stove with a tear at the unfairness, in her eye. Cooking, sewing, dusting were only feminine labors because the man's work took him out of the house. In these days when both are out, both must be equally in, and new forms of behavior must keep pace with new

conditions. And yet the most modern-minded young people fail to distinguish between customs that no longer pertain and those that still have validity.

Attempting to lay bare what the realities of the situation are is a major portion of the counsellor's task, but if he is also a minister of religion it is his privilege to lay bare a spirit, a way of life, without which all knowledge may prove inadequate to success and with which even simple minds may create something rich in values. Justice must be swallowed up in uncalculating, over-flowing goodwill. The supreme illustration is the attitude of the mother toward her children. Frequently in a critical situation, it has proved enough to question whether the behavior complained of followed the same kind of treatment of the husband as was given the child. It had not occurred to the aggrieved that one and the same spirit must animate all the relationships in the home. And as wife toward husband, so husband toward wife! The success of the second mile, cloke, coat, other cheek, spirit in breaking down seemingly adamant resistance and making possible the building of a new structure of love has been demonstrated too frequently in my experience for me to have any doubt as to its efficacy or necessity. Many illustrations might be given were they not too personal and perhaps identifiable. Believe me when I report that one couple who had not spoken a word to each other for five months though living under the same roof, are today devoted to each other, through the simple device of daily prescriptions of undeserved acts of kindness. They could not resist the effect of conduct that was so unwarranted. A way of life was the bequest of Jesus which ministers of religion cannot afford to fail to evoke when they start young people on a way of life together.

Marriage is the principal educational process by which we mature in our whole being. If young people can be brought to approach it as a means to growing up emotionally, the great lag in emotional development from which many people suffer all their lives might be overcome and the resulting happiness would help to confirm marriage. The counsellor as a disinterested, interested spectator has an opportunity that neither parents nor friends can have. Because he is a friendly stranger, the assumption is that his judgment will be without prejudice and his advice without animus. He is richly rewarded by the blessed sharing of sanctities which few others are permitted to know.



# The Religious Foundation for the New World Order

DAVID RHYS WILLIAMS

## I

The foundation of any world order, whether old or new, is man's attitude toward the universe in which he lives and moves and has his being. Tell me what it is that the majority of men really believe about the nature of the universe, and I will tell you what kind of social order they are likely to set up. When the ancients asked what it was that upheld the world, they were told that the world rested on the shoulders of a giant named Atlas. When they further inquired what it was that Atlas stood upon, they were informed that the giant's feet were planted on the back of a huge turtle. My contention is that theology or man's belief about the nature of the universe is the turtle of Atlas,—the real foundation upon which man's world eventually rests.

Every person has a theology, whether he knows it or not, whether he can describe it or not, and this is the most important thing about him. It is his dominating philosophy of life which constantly guides and controls his daily conduct. It is the motivating center of all his acting and thinking. It usually functions on a sub-conscious plane, but it is sometimes possible for an individual to phrase it in clear and unmistakable language. A man, or the social order which he builds, can be no better than his theology, although both can fall short of its full implication. The reality behind the universe is probably the same, yesterday, today, and forever. But man's basic conception of what this reality is has undergone several revolutionary changes which have been reflected in corresponding changes in the social order. Thus theology and the political institutions of mankind have pretty much walked together throughout the ages,—not arm in arm, to be sure, for the political institutions have generally lagged behind theology and have had a tendency to keep it from making greater progress. The two, however, are vitally related, pretty much as cause and effect although partly as effect and cause.

## II.

There was a time, for instance, when man's basic attitude toward the universe was one of fear and apprehension. The reality behind our life was thought to be a devil who must be avoided or placated. The unseen world was peopled with a host of arbitrary spirits, mostly evil and predatory. Hobgoblins, fiends and demons blocked the path of man whichever way he turned. They were always ready to spoil his plans, defeat his efforts, blast his hopes or take his life.

Man's dominating motive at that time was to escape the wrath of a malicious, supernatural order, to hide from it in sackcloth and ashes, if necessary, to buy it off with bribes and sacrifices, to deceive it with trickery and falsehood. Naturally there was little place in primitive man's religion for love and happy adoration. The universe was deemed hostile and man was its convenient and legitimate prey. What wonder then that the social ethics of that time was brutal and cruel and revengeful. What wonder that every man's hand was against his neighbor, for every man had to look out for himself while the devil took the hindmost. What wonder that organized religion gave its allegiance to witch doctors and exorcisers. What wonder that the prevailing system of economics was more or less cannibalistic in character. One had to eat his fellow-man before his fellow-man did the eating. A fearful theology gave rise to a social order that was literally shot through with fear.

## III

Gradually man's attitude toward the universe changed. The reality behind it came to be regarded as potentially benevolent, but still more or less arbitrary and therefore still to be feared, and, in addition, to be obeyed as subjects fear and obey a king. This reality bore various names, such as Yahweh, Jupiter, Vishnu and Horus. Man's chief motive in life now becomes the praise and obedience of a super-sovereign in the skies. Man has rights and privileges, but they are all handed down from above. When Yahweh tells Abraham to pull up stakes and journey into a far country, there is no choice but to go. When he suggests to Elijah that the prophets of Baal should be slain, his wish is law. The reality behind the universe is powerful and partial. He picks out certain people for special favors, and it is the part of wisdom to keep in his good

graces, for these special favors may be withdrawn at any moment. Therefore the people must be careful at all times to preserve a respectful attitude toward the source of their blessings.

God is an absolute monarch—men and women are his subjects. There is no call here for love, no place for self-respect. Man must bow mighty low or he will suffer direful consequences. Is it any wonder, with this kind of theology, that monarchs should rise to power or that slavery or feudalism should become the dominant economic system, or that absolutism should prevail among the priesthood, or that servility should characterize the masses of the people? The idea of an absolute monarch at the head of the universe begets a cringing attitude toward life. It is bound sooner or later to produce obedient but unthinking underlings. The foundation of the medieval Mohammedan empire was a God of arbitrary power. Such a God is the foundation of Japan's empire today. This is why the average Japanese is ready to do anything that his Emperor asks him to do. The Emperor is the Son of Heaven, and he can will no wrong. Therefore when the Emperor asks him to make war on the peaceful Chinese or bomb Pearl Harbor, he has only one duty and that is to obey orders. Obedience is the watchword throughout the length and breadth of the Japanese Empire today. It characterizes all its social institutions, from the custom of harikari to the practice of Emperor worship, and this obedience has its foundation in the religious faith of the people. Destroy that faith and the Empire would fall without outside interference.

#### IV.

Let me now mention another drastic change that has taken place in man's basic theology and show how it has been reflected in the social order. I refer to the concept of God as a Heavenly Father and the people of this earth as his children. The universe becomes more benevolent and less arbitrary. God is still to be obeyed, but in addition he is to be loved. He knows what is best for us. He has numbered all the hairs of our head. He watches the sparrow's fall. He provides for all our wants—food, drink, raiment—the Heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things, even before we ask. He punishes us for our wrong-doing only as an earthly parent reproves his child, namely, to do us good. But he forgives us when we repent. It is not his will that any

of his little ones should perish. Like a shepherd, he maketh us to lie down in green pastures, and leadeth us beside the still waters. This has been the fundamental faith of millions in the past. It is still the fundamental faith of millions today.

With this kind of theology, what wonder that there has been a steady mollification of the institutions of mankind, especially in Western civilization where this kind of theology has been more widespread. What wonder that governments have become paternalistic, yielding much of their former absolutism, while the stronger nations have assumed mandates and protectorates over weaker peoples. What wonder that papacy and episcopacy should develop as the prevailing ecclesiastical order. What wonder that philanthropy should grow apace, and the colored races should become the white man's burden. Let paternalism be thought to preside at the center of the universe, and paternalism will permeate the institutions of mankind.

Industry in America has been increasingly surrendering the arbitrary power it once exercised. It is rapidly becoming more benevolent toward those committed to its care. Employees are being given bonuses and clinical service. Employers have been taking a real interest in their departments of social welfare. The idea of trusteeship is capturing the holders of great wealth.

How long has the concept of a benevolent Heavenly Father been in existence? At least 3,000 years, and probably a good deal longer, but the economic order has only begun in the last few decades to react to the clear implications of the concept. As the seasons lag behind the ascending or receding sun, so the social institutions of mankind lag behind theology. A new commanding idea rises on the horizon of human thought before the old has finished its work.

Another significant change in man's basic attitude toward the universe is now about to take place. Indeed it is already taking place and sooner or later it is bound to bring about revolutionary changes in the social order. The reality that men have agreed to call by the general name of God, is no longer regarded as an enemy to be feared and placated (except in certain backward areas of the earth). Nor is it looked upon as an absolute monarch whose arbitrary wish is law, except among the Japanese, the Nazis, and certain Mohammedan and Hindu sects. Nor is the dependent re-



lation of children to a benevolent father an adequate description of the newly developing attitude in the world today. Men and women in many countries are coming more and more to look upon the universe as a friendly partner. God needs man as much as man needs him. God and man are of the same essence. They are co-creators in a cosmic task, co-partners in a universal enterprise, co-sharers in a common destiny. The old frightened attitude is going; the old servile attitude is going, and even the filial attitude is on its way out. Fear, subserviency, and even dependency are giving way to the spirit of self-respecting cooperation. God does not ask man to work *for* him or *under* him, but *with* him. Man does not expect God to work *for* him either, or *over* him, but *with* him. Dictatorship at the heart of the universe, whether infernal, imperial or paternal, is gradually being rejected, thanks in large part to the revelations of the scientific method, thanks also to the democratic implications of Hebrew prophecy. Man is standing up today and looking the universe more and more in the face, without prostrate deference on the one hand or reckless defiance on the other. The universe is something that calls for cooperation. God, the life behind it, is a great companion who must be understood and assisted, whose habits of working must be learned in order that man may understand how best to work with him.

Let demonism, absolutism and paternalism depart from the center of man's universe of thought, and demonism, absolutism, and paternalism will eventually depart from all his social institutions.

There is, without doubt, a new and revolutionary theology coming into being throughout the world today. It is being given conscious expression by many churchmen, scientists and sociologists alike. Postulate partnership at the heart of the universe, and the spirit of partnership is bound to permeate the whole of life.

The idea of a cooperative, democratic God is the only foundation for any new world order that is worth setting up after this war is over. Already, as a result of today's changing theology, I foresee certain inevitable transformations in the society of tomorrow.

1. For one thing, I foresee more democracy in government and not less. Kings and dictators are doomed. Men and women are going to insist more and more upon the duty as well as the right of governing themselves. They are going to reach the conclusion that no one is good and wise enough to do it for them. They

are going to insist upon the privilege of making their own mistakes in political engineering and not to permit this privilege to be monopolized by a few.

2. I also foresee more and more democracy in the world of industry and commerce. Men and women are going to insist upon a greater degree of control over their own economic destiny. Slavery will have to go. Exploitation will have to go. Even trusteeship will have to go. Partnership in the management as well as in the emoluments of industry and commerce is coming sooner or later.

3. I also foresee more democracy in our family life. The benevolent patriarch that once dominated the domestic scene has already lost his position of authority. All parental dictatorship will go out of fashion. Motherhood will become voluntary. Family life will become more and more a cooperative enterprise of equal personalities.

4. I also foresee more and more democracy in education. The acquisition of knowledge will become a joint undertaking of pupil and teacher alike. Wisdom will not be "ladled out like soup that has already been prepared by master cooks. Every one will be encouraged to taste the broth and add his own seasoning, before it is swallowed." The method of forum discussion will supplant the platform lectures. Teachers will appeal to the authority of experimentation and listen to the wisdom of children, as well as impart their own.

5. There is likewise going to be more and more democracy even among the churches of mankind. The magic medicine-man and the witch doctor have all but disappeared. The infallible priest who holds the keys of heaven and hell is still with us, but his days are definitely numbered. The paternal pastor who watches over his people as a shepherd over his flock is also in for a loss of prestige. The religious leader of the new tomorrow will be compelled to be more democratic in his manner and habits. He will not presume to preach a sermon on some controversial subject without giving those who disagree with his conclusions a fair chance to do so. He will be obliged to regard the proclamation of religious truth as a joint endeavor, a mutual undertaking, and a common responsibility of both layman and minister. The voice of the layman will be heard more frequently in the pulpit, and the unchallenged sermon will give way to the religious conference.

6. Finally, I foresee more and more democracy in the race relations of mankind. The assumption of *ethnic* superiority is bound sooner or later to be liquidated in favor of mutual respect and cultural cooperation. There will be no chosen people, no white man's burden, no subject races. All peoples are going to be compelled to recognize their inter-dependence, and to be more cognizant of the special contributions of each to the welfare of the rest.

All these things I foresee as the logical result of a new attitude toward the universe which is gradually taking possession of the minds and imaginations of men today, in China, in Russia, in America and Great Britain. Man's attitude toward the universe has vitally molded the social order in the past. His new attitude, in my judgment, will eventually create a new earth. It may take many more years than any of us wishes were necessary, but the basic idea is already here and at work. It will expand and grow. "There is nothing more powerful under heaven than an idea whose hour has arrived."

Here, in the concept of a cooperating God, is the religious foundation of the New World Order that is to be, which we pray will mean a working federation of all the nations.

# The Theology of Inclusion

ALEXANDER WINSTON

## I.

Hegel wisely viewed the history of philosophy from the standpoint of this guiding principle: the various logically-consistent schools of philosophic thought are true in what they include, false in what they leave out. Contemporary theology, when examined according to the same guiding principle, strongly suggests that Hegel was right. We may plot the various gradations of current religious thought into the familiar polar figure, the two extremes giving undue emphasis to this or that phase of religious experience. We shall attempt to defend a middle position that mediates the extremes and includes elements of both. The poles of the scale do have significant things to report, but they seem to be false in what they leave out.

The willingness of some present-day theologians to maintain paradoxical beliefs, indeed to glory in them, finds some justification in their desire to be inclusive. They refuse to eliminate from their thinking an experientially-validated concept just because it does not at this date and stage of their thinking seem compatible with another experientially-validated concept. For them, reality cannot be neatly caught in the cup of logic: it overflows in the full pouring of experiences which temporarily or permanently transcend logic. This group of theologians is endeavoring, more or less consciously, to restore an adequate *inclusiveness* to theology.

For example, in a recent article Paul Tillich (and a group of men associated with *The Protestant*) stated seven fundamentals of Protestantism. We will quote one of them to illustrate the characteristic movement of their thought: "Protestantism *affirms* Divine Sovereignty over the institutions and doctrines of the Christian churches and *protests* against attempts to bind the Christian message to the life and law of any historical Church." ("Our Protestant Principles," *The Protestant*, Vol. IV No. 7, p. 10.) The dual movement of affirmation and protest is a two-edged sword cutting from the inclusive middle toward both the undue emphases of the extremes. The affirmation serves as a protest against humanistic or deistic thinkers who act as though God were not sovereign; the protest serves as an affirmation of man's inadequacy to mirror fully the will of the Lord.



Our purpose in this article is briefly and inexhaustively to indicate an inclusive theological position mediating the two extremes of contemporary religious thought. It is difficult to find terms applicable to the three positions. Among both theological and lay minds there are emotional attachments to almost every available term. This fact presents the writer with unfortunate choices. We will use the following terms: the left-wing extreme will be called "radical naturalism," the middle will be called "inclusive liberalism" and the right-wing will be called "orthodoxy." It will be convenient to pursue the subject at hand under four main heads: (1) God, (2) man, (3) Jesus and Christianity, (4) the church.

## II.

### 1. *God.*

Radical naturalism is strongly empirical in temper, operating largely on the tacit assumption that what cannot be proved on empirical grounds ought not to be asserted at all. It believes scientific knowledge to have paramount validity, scientific advance to be all-important, and the methods of scientific investigation to be applicable in every sphere of the real. As a result, a world-view allegedly derived from science has taken hold of naturalistic thought. Of God various views are held: (1) He is the evolutionary process, (2) He is the sum total of all that human minds hold dear, (3) He may or may not exist at all. In all these theories the practical outcome is the same, namely, a growing secularism wherein the universe is conceived as a self-perpetuating whole, independent of the active will of a Divine Mind. If there is a Kingdom of Heaven, it is a kingdom of the earth.

Orthodoxy minimizes the importance of scientific method where ultimate religious orientations are involved. Of course, we must remember that the most orthodox of Christian churches, the Roman Catholic, also exhibits the most extensive and ambitious rational edifice—that of Aquinas, and that Catholic scientists have made valuable contributions to empirical knowledge. Yet orthodoxy does not *rest its case* upon science, but upon the revealed Word of God. Where radical naturalism doubts that man can know God at all, orthodoxy claims a final revelation of Him. God is for the latter all in all—creator, sovereign, complete source of the real and determiner of our destiny. The Kingdom of Heaven is indeed in heaven.

Inclusive liberalism attempts to mediate these antitheses. Science,

which has a significant role in collecting and reporting measurable facts, goes astray when it tries to interpret all reality in terms of its own limited methodology. It cannot give us religion but it can criticize religion. God is indeed sovereign (transcendent and immanent at once) yet it is His nature to permit man an area of self-determination. We are neither wholly ignorant of God nor fully aware of Him: we see Him from a limited perspective, and so while we really see Him, we see Him only partially. (This epistemological position, called "perspective realism" or "objective relativism," has been variously developed by Whitehead, Russell, Murphy, McGilvary, Marhenke and other contemporary philosophers.) The Kingdom of Heaven may be in this world or beyond; it is a state of God's grace which may be approached wherever man achieves harmony with God's intent for him.

## 2. *Man.*

The sanctity of human personality is the foundation-stone of radical naturalism. When God ceased to play an active role in the world of scientific investigation, the universe itself tended to become the object of adoration and the seat of mystery. Later, as stars, moons and tides, birth and procreation suffered the inevitable dissection of the researcher's scalpel, radical naturalism found itself less and less able to worship that which science sought (often successfully) to control. Man alone was left as an object of worship. His innate powers, his "divinity," and his in-born reason and conscience were considered sufficient for his needs. Man, at least to religious humanism, was alone in a world hostile, or neutral or, if friendly, nevertheless inferior to him. No one can save man but himself, and he has the power, through science and education, to do it.

Orthodoxy historically depreciated man's power to save himself. The triumph of semi-Augustinianism over Pelagianism accomplished this goal for Catholicism, as Calvinism succeeded in setting a similar theme for Reformation Puritanism. Man is born in sin, lives in sin and, unless helped by God, dies in sin. Only God can save man: man can literally do nothing for himself.

Inclusive liberalism considers that man is at once sinful and in the image of God. He possesses divine qualities due to God's immanence in the world, and at the same time he is under the judgment of the transcendent and ultimate Deity. Man neither saves himself nor does God do it by a simple *fiat*. It is the nature of the two to seek

each other—man by prayer, God by grace. Salvation is a meeting of an ascending spirit and a descending God.

### 3. *Jesus and Christianity.*

Radical naturalism tends to break sharply with Christianity. I have heard leading laymen of liberal churches rank Jesus no higher than Lincoln as a religious leader; I have heard a leading liberal minister announce in a sermon that "we cannot learn a single thing from the Bible." At its farthest point radical naturalism is frankly non-Christian, seeking rather a set of ideas and practices which underlie all religions but are peculiar to none.

Orthodoxy believes that Jesus was perfect God as well as perfect man, that his revelation is final and ultimate, and that he possesses an absolutely unique place in the world's history. As he can never be transcended, neither can his church founded on his life and doctrine be supplanted. It is the body of Christ, deriving its ontological status from his life and continuing headship.

Inclusive liberalism affirms (to use the words of Tillich) the supremacy of Jesus and the Christian tradition flowing therefrom, and protests against the assertion that either one is the full and perfect revelation of God. We do not know anything superior to holy love as Jesus exemplifies it (that is, love which is just when justice is best, merciful where mercy is called for), yet we acknowledge the finitude and frailty evident in details of both the life and the tradition.

### 4. *The Church.*

Radical naturalism, with its emphasis upon freedom, is extremely individualistic. The church shrinks in importance, has no metaphysical status, is but a social convenience. Tradition, as expressed in ancient symbols, ceremonies and writings, is minimized. Contemporaneity is at a premium. The prophetic note is sought. There is serious belief in some quarters that the church is being, and ought to be, supplanted by secular agencies.

Orthodoxy places greatest importance on the institution. Authority is given a most prominent position and the priestly functions of the clergy are ascendant. Liturgy and symbolism are the core of religious practice. The eternal church established by God Himself to be the home of his believers until His reign shall come is a powerful influence in orthodoxy's attitude toward the whole makeup of society.

Inclusive liberalism sees the individual achieving religious maturity only within the encompassing organism of the church. A church may be established at any time, and is not, therefore, valid only as one historical foundation. The ontological status of the religious society is not prior to the coming together of individual members; however, once those members have united, a new entity is achieved. That entity is the church of God. It is other than a collection of individuals. The church is moreover held to be an essential institution for the salvation of men. Prophetic and priestly at once, it knits the traditional liturgy into the growing edge of the urgent present. The Church (that is, *men worshipping*, whenever and wherever they may do so) is ultimate, but no single religious establishment is ultimate.

### III.

The purpose of this article has been to state in broad outlines the characteristics of the two extremes and the inclusive middle position in theology. The brevity of such a study prevents us from giving full justice to exceptions and border-line cases which spring to mind. Notwithstanding the exceptions, the broad outlines remain. To summarize: Radical naturalism minimizes the power of God and maximizes the power of man; places Jesus one among many prophets and Christianity one among many faiths; looks upon the church nominalistically as a collection of individuals gathered for a common purpose. Orthodoxy maximizes the power of God and minimizes the power of man; makes Jesus the full and perfect revelation of God, with Christianity the receptacle of absolute and final truth; looks upon the Christian church as a unique, historically-derived ontological entity, the validity of which lies in its being the body of Christ. Inclusive liberalism proclaims the sovereignty of God without relinquishing the area of responsibility and self-determination reserved to man: sees man as both sinful and created in the image of the Divine; looks upon Jesus as the supreme Lord of Life and his church as the supreme vessel of human faith, without admitting either of them to be absolutely ultimate; and declares the church to gain ontological status wherever and whenever a group of individuals unite under the gaze of God to seek the indwelling of His holy spirit.



# The Protestant Spirit and the Protestant Church

ARTHUR L. WEATHERLY

An attitude of mind, an interpretation of experience, a judgment of the significance of a series of historical events, a conviction as to what constitutes justice in a particular circumstance,—all these are intangibles. They belong to the vast company of imponderables that so powerfully affect the conduct of men and women. They give testimony to the saying of Jesus, "Man does not live by bread alone."

Among all the imponderables the one that seems to be rooted most firmly in the soil of human nature is a respect for one's own personality. It is more than respect; it is reverence. It involves more than Shakespeare's

*To thine own self be true  
And it must follow as the night the day  
Thou can'st not then be false to any man.*

For this reverence for the self rises from the plane of personal to that of social values. I do not mean that all men exhibit this sense of personal worth. As a matter of fact, some do not seem to possess even the rudiments of it. And yet I am unwilling to say that this quality is not inherent in human nature. All men seem to have some sense of rhythm and harmony, but only a few men have it in the measure that Bach, Beethoven and Wagner did. Only in a few does this sense of the worth of the self and the recognition of its meaning to humanity rise like a mountain peak from a plain. But these throughout the course of human history are like pillars of cloud by day and fire by night which guide men on the way. These men are the carriers from generation to generation of the Protestant Spirit. They have affirmed not only the worth and dignity of the human personality but also its sacredness. They have been the challengers of tyranny, the defiers of every attempt to enslave the souls of men. If the past is any guide to the future, we may affirm that the spirit of man cannot be everywhere and forever crushed by any power whether it be of church or state.

With this in mind I ask you to consider the difference between the Protestant church and the Protestant Spirit. But before doing this I wish to call attention to the danger that always is involved in organization. Man having discovered a truth vital in human welfare is impelled to urge its presentation to others. An organization follows, and then organization becomes identified with the truth it was formed to promulgate. At this point the organization becomes an institution, something holy in itself. It is supported by memories and tradition but finally loses all contact with the truth for which it was created. This danger is inherent in all organization, even in so simple an organization as our Unitarian church. And yet it seems to be the only way: mankind is forever building barriers to impede its progress and over which it must climb or which it must destroy.

In the second century B.C. the Greek-Roman world was in a ferment. The culture developed in the Greek city states, the highest man had yet attained, was threatened with complete overthrow. Alexander had conquered the world. His surviving generals fought over it. Unaware of the growing power of the Romans to the West they proceeded year after year with the policy of self-destruction. Amid the carnage and horror of these wars there arose the hope and faith in another world. Savior Gods, Dyings Gods, a plenty were offered to a despairing people. The Roman power moved slowly but implacably to the East. The Empire grew, the Republic vanished. Emperors came and ruled not free men but slaves. The ancient religions, the gods on Olympus, the gods of river, vale and forest, vanished. Out of the remnants and fragments of the old a new religion was born. Into it went elements from every nook and corner of the Roman world. Even far off India contributed its bit. Slowly through centuries this religion brought hope to a world in despair. Not here but above was man to find his reward. Heaven not earth was the home of man. But here on earth were men bound together by the ties of a new faith. There were the sick to be cared for, the poor to be aided. Not only this, but the truth of the new religion was to be preserved. So organization came and with it power. Finally the day came when this new religion which had come to be called the religion of Christ was the religion of the Roman Empire. Its truth slowly became a creed, its power human and earthly. The organization

became an institution that inherited the power of Imperial Rome, its head the Pontifex Maximus. The agents of this institution became responsible for its continuance and growth in power. It was the sacred ark which contained God's covenant with the new Israel. To touch the ancient ark meant death. To touch the new ark meant death also. The Roman imperial power had become embodied in a religion.

From Asia Minor, that region of which John Fiske has said that it has been prolific of ideas which have profoundly affected the Western world, came ideas that threatened the whole structure, indeed the very foundation of the Imperial Church. As the church grew in material and political power its representatives, the defenders of The Truth, grew more and more insistent that it must extend its power over the minds of all men.

The Protestant Spirit, the affirmation that the individual is greater than any institution, found expression in spite of the church's decrees backed by the state's power. Through the nearly two milleniums of the church's history the struggle has been continued.

Frost, in his poem *Mending Wall*, says, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." And something there is in human nature that does not love a wall that denies man his opportunity to search for the truth.

We think of the Reformation as the beginning of a movement, as the origin of the Protest against the power of the Imperial Church. As a matter of fact, the Reformation inaugurated by Luther was but one incident in a long chain of events. There never was a time after the Church claimed for itself through its priests authority over men when that authority was not denied.

The Reformation took the Protestant name. It became a form of protest against an authority that claimed power over the lives and souls of all men. It denied the Pope and affirmed the Bible. It rejected the word of the living and accepted the word of the dead. It joined with the ancient Church in seeking to destroy every form of protest that rested in the recognition of the worth and dignity of human reason.

The Protestant Church, rising to power and creating an organization that soon became an institution, lost sight of the Protestant Spirit which continued to battle against both the Imperial Church and the Church that called itself Protestant. The church or

churches for the most part which bore the Protestant name entirely denied the Protestant Spirit. Their record is one of the most pitiable in the whole history of man's effort to release himself from the shackles he continually is placing upon himself.

The "Reformation" reacted on the ancient Church. The Counter-Reformation came and gave it a new lease of life.

The "Reformation" broke into many warring factions each asserting that it possessed the Truth. Forms, rituals, types of organization became shibboleths, centers of conflict, and out of the welter of dogmatism came the modern Protestant Church. When one reads the long, long list of denominations, one wonders what is the relation of all these, four times as many as Heinz' 57 Varieties, to those values which give meaning to human endeavor,—justice, love and mercy.

But the Protestant Spirit was not to be denied. If it had been crushed between the onslaught of warring sectaries, then that which is most precious in human life would have been destroyed.

The Protestant Spirit lives because man is man. Something there is in human nature which carries it on from generation to generation. It lights fires of hope. They signal the way to coming generations.

The Protestant Spirit is not something occult. It is the property of no class. It is not the exclusive privilege of any nation. It finds expression in man's quest for a larger and fuller life, in his desire to probe the deep things of the spirit, in his longing to know more of the meaning of life.

When a "thinker" appears, that is, a searcher, there is no force or power on the earth, or in the heavens above the earth or in the waters beneath the earth that can stop the operation of his mind.

The Protestant Spirit is the spirit of free inquiry. It denies not the past. It does not reject what man hath wrought. But it tests all in the light of human experience. There is no field of thought, no phase of experience that can deny it entrance. There are no thoroughfares that can be permanently closed to the searching mind.

It is this attitude which gives dignity and worth to the individual. More than this, it gives meaning and character to all life.

There is nothing more beautiful in all the world, nothing more inspiring than the scholar who moves reverently yet persistently forward into that darkness which we call the future. He who would stay his hand or retard his footstep denies the creative power itself.



My indictment of the Protestant Church is that it has denied from its beginning the Protestant Spirit. Its authority has been robbed of its living power. Its purpose has been to crystallize the thought of man into creeds, dogmas and rituals.

Against all this the free spirit of man rebels, and ever will rebel. This is not a mere negative attitude, for it rests upon the affirmation that man, the individual, must be forever the judge who tests all man's creations. Galileo denied and yet he affirmed. The Church could compel him to bend his knee but there was no power in heaven or on earth that could control his thought. He could recant with his lips but not with his mind. Voltaire defending Jean Colas sentenced to death for heresy was protesting, it is true, but by the very act of protest he was affirming the right of every man to find his own way to God.

The Protestant Spirit rises to affirm that the highest court of appeal is in the last analysis that which we call the conscience of the individual. Read the story of the anti-slavery movement in America, and you read the story of the Protestant Spirit in action. The State and the Church affirmed that obedience to the law was the way of life. And here and there like flames of fire there arose those who said, "Only when the law is just is it the way of life." The fugitive slave made a greater appeal to Emerson than "the law."

The so-called "conscientious objector," the one who proclaims that no one can compel him to kill another, he is the affirmer of affirmers. He affirms that there is no force either in heaven or hell, or on the earth, that can compel him to violate the integrity of his self.

If we as a Unitarian church have any reason for existence, if we are to justify our existence, it is only as we as individual members are devoted to this great task. As long as we are so devoted there will be an organization and this will not be an institution. Organizations only live and have meaning as they have purpose and ends outside themselves. They can no more live to themselves than can individuals. But organizations in themselves have no power or meaning. It is the individual members that give the organization meaning.

So there is laid upon us by our association as members of this congregation a high and holy mission, one that appeals to the noblest qualities within us.

# The British Manifesto for a Free Faith

L. A. GARRARD

It has often been alleged as one of the weaknesses of religious liberals that the saying "*Quot homines tot sententiae*" applies to them with peculiar force. "Where two Unitarians are gathered together there you have three opinions." And though from time to time there have been pamphlets by individual authors bearing such titles as "The Beliefs of a Unitarian," and even short statements of Unitarian affirmations, such as "We believe in the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the leadership of Jesus and salvation by character," which have commanded, at any rate for a time, a fairly general assent, neither of these types of declaration has provided a completely satisfactory answer to the criticism, and that for reasons which are really to our credit. For it is a sign of vitality that we have come to regard most of the individual essays as already out of date and to feel that the general summaries are too vague to be of much assistance to the earnest seeker who desires to know what Unitarians do generally believe.

There are, indeed, quite a number of Unitarians in England who are highly suspicious of any attempt to satisfy this search. They would argue that any formulation of what most Unitarians at present believe will inevitably lead to a suspicion that anyone who does not believe this is not a good Unitarian. Their fear of anything that could possibly be regarded as the first step towards intellectual regimentation or the imposition of a creed, however groundless the fear might be, must be treated with respect. It is the natural reaction of the rugged individualist who has thought his own way to the position he holds, and the presence of an exceptionally high proportion of such members in our churches is predominantly a source of strength. But though it must be treated tenderly, there is no need to allow this fear to paralyse the movement to satisfy the equally widespread and genuine need for some modern statement of the position characteristic of the Unitarian mind today. Indeed, if it calls forth a note of warning and a re-statement of the principle of freedom and of the reasons why an enforced subscription to creeds is abhorrent to the liberal mind, that will be all to the good.

Others have opposed any attempt to fill the gap on the ground that it was hopeless and doomed to failure from the start. Sometimes sadly, sometimes with an air of bravado, they have been prepared to acquiesce in the position that religious liberals must be agreed to differ, since they could agree in nothing else. And they have been able to point to definite failures in the past.

Fortunately there have been others who have never allowed these failures to daunt their spirit. The need was there, it ought to be met and by the grace of God it could be met. In time their bolder counsel prevailed and at length it has borne fruit. The leading spirit of this group in England

in recent years has been the Editor of the *Inquirer*, the Rev. E. G. Lee. At their Summer Conference in 1938 he laid before the Old Students of Manchester College, Oxford, his plan for the production of a volume of essays by leading Unitarians which would constitute in effect a statement of the free faith as it was held by those who might be supposed to be most closely in touch with modern currents of thought. The idea was enthusiastically acclaimed and was later put before a wider circle of ministers, to whom it proved equally acceptable.

It was now obvious that there was a strong body of opinion in favour of making a determined effort to produce a volume that would fairly represent the liberal position as it is held today. The next step was to solicit the aid of the General Assembly, and this was duly forthcoming. A board of three, consisting of the President and Secretary of the General Assembly and the Secretary of the Ministerial Fellowship, were deputed to nominate the members of a Commission, the terms of reference being designed to allay any suspicions of the kind to which allusion has been made; they begin as follows:—"While recognizing the fundamental character of our adherence to the principle of the complete religious freedom of our churches, and of individual members of those churches, the Council requests the following to prepare a considered statement of our free religious faith." Fourteen members were originally appointed, two of whom resigned through ill-health or overwork, while one new member was co-opted; so that the final work bears thirteen signatures. In the main it was thought desirable to represent the younger generations, and the members of the Commission were all under sixty; this explains the absence of some well-known names.

The Commission met for the first time on April 22nd, 1940 for a single afternoon, to discuss procedure and the general plan. The Rev. R. V. Holt, tutor in Religious History at Manchester College, Oxford, was appointed Chairman of the Commission, and as such becomes Editor of the volume to be published. In all, nine meetings were held, extending as a rule over three days; the last was in April, 1943. Eight members attended all the meetings. When it is remembered that the earlier part of this period coincided with the Battle of Britain and the night raids on our big cities (London was raided on fifty-seven consecutive nights), and that the members of the Commission were all ministers of religion whose labours have been greatly increased by the war, it will be agreed that this was a remarkable achievement.

At the first meeting various schemes were brought forward for covering the ground, and it was found that these were sufficiently similar to fall into two or three distinct groups. By the end of the meeting one of these alternatives had received general approval. The next step was to find volunteers willing to contribute essays that between them would cover the greater part of the field, and it was soon found that there was sufficient variety of interest among the members of the Commission to encourage the hope that this would be possible. The titles of some of the papers



offered will give a good idea of the general nature of the Report, and the way in which it was built up:—Nature, God and Man; Self-Consciousness, Personality and God; Worship, Sacraments and Prayer; Psychological Objections to the Reality of a Spiritual Order; The Problem of Evil; Human Destiny; Sin and Forgiveness; The Myth in Religion; Religion and Religions; The Significance of Jesus; The Nature and Function of the Church. One or two of the papers were of such a specialist nature, or represented so individual a view that the Commission as a whole did not feel inclined to give them its assent, but nevertheless felt that they should be included in the Report, as evidence that we have in our ranks men able to deal with these aspects; in such cases a note to this effect will be appended. As a rule, however, the papers were carefully scrutinised, line by line, and later re-written to a greater or less extent to meet criticism. At times the Commission would be held up for an hour or more on the discussion of a single point, even of a word. In this way, while the essays retain the style of the individual author, all but one or two of them have the general assent of all members. Wherever any statement appeared as it stood to be untrue in the eyes of any member, a way was always found of either overcoming the objection or deleting the sentence with the author's approval, or re-stating it in a less objectionable form. Even the most pessimistic members of the Commission were compelled, as time went on, to admit that their fears had not been justified by the event. There emerged, without any sacrifice of principle or conviction, an increasing sense of underlying unity and deep spiritual fellowship. We came to know and respect each other, even those who most differed from us in their theological emphasis, as we had never done before. Indeed, the meetings of the Commission were a wonderful demonstration of that genius for compromise on non-essentials and respect for the convictions of the individual that have enabled the Anglo-Saxon peoples to make a success of democracy.

And so, gradually, the Report has been hammered out until it is now complete except for the Preface and a few minor verbal changes. It consists of some eighteen individual essays and a rather longer one by the Editor, designed both to summarise the conclusions of the various contributions and to bridge the gaps between them. The whole Report will run to about 75,000 words. It is for the General Assembly to decide upon the method and time of publication, and for this many factors will have to be considered, notably the importance of finding the right psychological moment for bringing it before the reading public and the difficulty of persuading a publisher to devote some of his scanty quota of paper to a work of this kind. In general, the Commission itself was in favour of seeking publication at the earliest practicable date, and, if necessary, of obtaining subsidies from every possible quarter in order that the book may be issued at a price which will bring it within the purchasing power of the plain man who is seeking a plain statement of a free religious faith.



# Book Reviews

## THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE BIBLE

The profitable reading of the Bible would be advanced if the nature and origin of this priceless literature were better understood. Dr. Soares' short book is a true contribution to this end for while it treats especially of the concept of God, it sets forth the changing thoughts and practices of the Jewish people from the earliest recorded times to the beginnings of Christianity. The central thought and faith of the Bible is God but the concepts are as various as were the pronounced types of people who held them. We speak of the Gospel according to Matthew, etc. and in like phrase we might speak of the concept of God according to Deuteronomy, to Amos, etc. There is the God of the Nomads and the Covenant God, the God of Battles, the Judge of all the Earth, the God of Love, the Redeemer, and God Incarnate, to quote certain of the chapter headings of the book.

The idea of God is ever-changing and what is more significant, ever-growing. Does all this lend force to the belief that man is ever creating a God in his own image or the exact opposite, that God is becoming and is made manifest as men have the capacity to receive and comprehend?

Dr. Soares is the right man to give us this study since he adds to scholarly attainments, simplicity and clarity of expression and reverence. The result is a book which should be very useful in the class-room and equally useful in the reinforcement of personal faith.

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## "THE FLAG WAS ALL RIGHT, ANY WAY"

A legal brief submitted to the Supreme Court is a novel subject for review in a theological journal. But the 26-page argument of the distinguished Committee on the Bill of Rights of the American Bar Association merits attention because it upholds the church's side in the current church-state controversy reflected in the Jehovah's Witnesses compulsory flag salute cases, an issue in which all religious liberals should be vitally concerned.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of *Minersville School District vs. Gobitis* the Supreme Court in 1940 (the 5 to 4 majority opinion written by Mr. Justice Frankfurter) decided that legislatures and school districts might determine "the appro-

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<sup>1</sup>THE GROWING CONCEPT OF GOD IN THE BIBLE. By Theodore Gerald Soares. Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1943. 96 pp. .50.

<sup>2</sup>*The West Virginia State Board of Education, etc., et al., Appellants, vs. Walter Barnette, Paul Stull, and Lucy McClure, Appellees.* Supreme Court of the United States, October Term, 1942. Brief of the Committee on the Bill of Rights, of the American Bar Association, as Friends of The Court.

priateness of various means to evoke that unifying sentiment without which there can ultimately be no liberties, civil or religious," specifically, the requirement that all children daily salute the flag. In a vigorous dissenting opinion, Chief Justice Stone raised questions concerning the pragmatic aspects of the question. Mr. Justice Frankfurter and the majority chose not to do so.

The brief here under review re-states simply and cogently the arguments on behalf of the Witnesses: that religious liberty is a real issue; that no clear and immediate danger to the public interest is involved; that learned discussion of the *Gobitis* case condemns the decision; and that the actual result of said decision has been to inflame adversely a heretofore tolerant public opinion (*cf.* the Federal Council of Churches *Information Service*, Jan. 30, 1943).

In view of the reversal on May 3rd, 1943, of a former decision of the Court holding valid city ordinances compelling Jehovah's Witnesses to pay a license fee for the distribution of religious literature, there is good prospect that the compulsory flag salute ruling will be reversed also.

The issue is the very delicate one, handled with consummate insight and wisdom by Mr. Justice Frankfurter (and the entire Court, for that matter), concerning the boundary between religious freedom and state compulsion. One must respect Mr. Justice Frankfurter's decision in the *Gobitis* case. His reasons were carefully and cautiously stated. He might have bowled over the Witnesses, demolished them with hysterical patriotic platitudes—he might have, that is, were he not the eminent scholar that he is.

But with the accession of a new justice to the Court, replacing one who voted with the majority in the *Gobitis* case, it is highly possible that the purely nominal demands of the state in the Witness cases—they have been shown to involve no actual unpatriotic acts—will be relaxed, and that the Supreme Court will accept the principle of the concluding words of the brief here under review:

"The nation which survived Valley Forge and the dark days of the Civil War without compulsory flag salutes will not go to rack and ruin because a few children fail to participate in this novel ceremony on account of their religious beliefs . . . Robert Frost, the poet, put this whole case in a nutshell when he recently said in reply to the observation that Mr. Justice Stone's opinion showed no such fears:

"Yes, he knew the flag was all right, any way'."

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